



## Improving community health one family at a time

### The Issue

Twenty percent of children are obese or overweight before their fifth birthdays, which impacts their health, learning and self esteem. Therefore, the early life influence of parents, caregivers and other family members in teaching and modeling good eating and physical activity habits should not be ignored. First 5 San Joaquin recognized the importance of parents and family in creating the foundation for healthy lifestyle habits and approached the UC CalFresh Nutrition Education Program in San Joaquin County. UC CalFresh is a key partner in providing families with in-home nutrition and exercise programs that focus on improving family eating and physical activity behaviors.



UC CalFresh works with First 5 San Joaquin

### What Has ANR Done?

UC CalFresh Family Nutrition Educators in San Joaquin trained 15 First 5 Parent Health Educators to deliver the Happy, Healthy Me (HHM); Go, Glow, Grow (GGG); or Eating Smart, Being Active (ESBA) lessons. The lessons were presented to 1,255 parents with children aged birth to five in their homes. Eighty-three percent of the participants were Latino/Hispanic with the majority indicating their primary language was Spanish. The project design was based on the "parent as teacher" model. Educators worked with parents and their children in their homes to teach the lessons and activities from the UC CalFresh curricula. For families where the child was too young to participate and understand curricula activities, adult ESBA lessons were delivered to the parents. An evaluation was conducted by both the UC CalFresh Nutrition Education Program and Harder+Company Community Research for First 5 San Joaquin.

### The Payoff

#### Results = Family Knowledge/Lifestyle Changes

Two hundred sixty parents completed the ESBA eight-lesson series. As evidenced by pre/post food behavior checklist results, parents who completed the series improved their food resource management practices, nutrition practices, food safety practices, frequency of reading labels, and ate a greater variety of vegetables and fruits following the lessons. Specifically, parents demonstrated improvement in their food resource management behaviors by increasing their frequency in planning meals that includes using a grocery list (61 percent), and comparing prices (54 percent). Nearly all parents (99 percent) "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that they felt more confident in their knowledge of how to live a healthy lifestyle and, importantly, how to help their child lead a healthy lifestyle. Since receiving services from a health educator, most parents (67 percent) indicated their child's physical activity level increased "a lot."

### Clientele Testimonial

"I have become more aware of the way I prepare my food. We have also tried to make meal plans ahead of time. This was a great program for my family and definitely benefited everyone in our home." - First 5 San Joaquin parent

### Contact

#### Supporting Unit:

UC CalFresh Nutrition Education Program UC Cooperative Extension

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